

Borough of



Wednesbury.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,**

*For the YEAR ended DECEMBER 31st, 1904.*

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**WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D., Edin.,**

*MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.*

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1905

Borough of Wednesbury.

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# REPORT

UPON THE

## *HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY,*

FOR THE YEAR 1904,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

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TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE  
WEDNESBURY TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1904. The statistics which are given are based upon an assumed population of 26,700, as was the case last year.

### 1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1904 was 933 (males, 478, females, 455), which is equal to a birth-rate of 34·9 per 1000 of the population. The natural increase of births over deaths was 430.

The deaths from all causes numbered 503, which is equal to a death-rate of 18·8 per 1000 of the population. The deaths of children under five years of age numbered 282, or 56 per cent. of the total deaths. Of these 162 were under one year of age.

The following table furnishes an analysis of deaths under five years of age during the past five years :—

	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904
Premature Birth and Wasting Diseases ... ..	64	18	27	13	20
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	39	37	46	41	36
Scarlatina ... ..	4	3	12	22	4
Measles ... ..	59	1	13	1	55
Whooping Cough ... ..	1	16	11	19	7
Diarrhœa ... ..	43	29	7	11	42
Diphtheria ... ..	—	3	1	4	15
Other Causes ... ..	56	86	102	105	103
	266	193	219	216	282
Percentages of total Deaths	50·05	50·00	48·00	49·4	56

The next table gives the deaths due to Zymotic Disease. These numbered 147—a number equal to a Zymotic death-rate of 5·5 per 1000. For the purpose of comparison the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are included in this Table.

	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904
Smallpox ... ..	—	—	—	—	—
Fever—Simple, Continued, and Typhoid ... ..	4	4	5	3	8
Scarlet Fever ... ..	6	3	13	27	5
Measles ... ..	59	1	14	1	57
Diphtheria ... ..	—	5	1	5	19
Diarrhœa ... ..	46	31	7	13	44
Whooping Cough ... ..	1	16	11	19	7
Influenza ... ..	—	5	2	5	7
Total ... ..	116	65	53	73	147
Death-rate per 1000 ...	4·4	2·5	1·9	2·7	5·5

The next table gives the mortality from pulmonary disease :—

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumouia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1900	83	35	118
1901	72	12	84
1902	98	19	117
1903	81	18	99
1904	70	27	97

Following is a statement of the Vaccination performed during the year ending June 30th, 1904 :—

Births Registered.	Successfully Vaccinated.	Insusceptible.	Dead Unvaccinated.	Medical postponements.	Certificates sent in of conscientious objections.	Removals known.	Removals unknown.	Unaccounted for.
907	723	1	97	7	38	9	28	4

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 15, which may be thus stated :—

Natural Causes	...	...	...	...	1
Accidents	...	...	...	...	10
Suicide	...	...	...	...	4
					—
Total	...	...	...	...	15

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1904, from all causes, classified according to diseases and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period :—





## Urban District of Wednesbury.

Causes of, and ages at, Death during 1904 :—

CAUSE OF DEATH.	All Ages.	Under 1 year	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and up- wards.
Measles ... ..	57	10	45	2			
Scarlet Fever ... ..	5		4	1			
Whooping Cough ... ..	7	1	6				
Diphtheria and Membraneous Croup ... ..	23	2	16	5			
Enteric Fever ... ..	8		1		2	5	
Influenza ... ..	7		1			4	2
Diarrhœa ... ..	44	37	5				
Enteritis ... ..	13	11	2				
Phthisis ... ..	27			2	2	23	
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	15	7	6	2			
Cancer ... ..	16					13	3
Bronchitis ... ..	39	12	8		1	4	14
Pneumonia ... ..	31	6	10		1	10	4
Alcoholism } ... ..	3					3	
Cirrhosis of Liver }							
Venereal Disease ... ..	1	1					
Premature Birth ... ..	20	20					
Diseases and Accidents of Par- turation ... ..	1					1	
Heart Disease ... ..	24			4	1	12	7
Accidents ... ..	10	1		1	1	5	2
Suicides ... ..	4					3	1
All other Causes ... ..	148	54	16	3	3	33	39
All Causes ... ..	503	162	120	20	11	116	74

Following is a table giving the average birth-rate, death-rate, and zymotic-rate for the past ten years.

Year.	Estimated Population.	No. of Births.	No. of Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 living.	Birth-rate per 1,000 living.	Zymotic Death-rate.
1895	25,000	872	499	19.7	34.4	1.9
1896	„	859	528	20.8	37.9	3.2
1897	„	899	499	19.7	35.5	2.7
1898	26,000	938	486	18.6	36.0	3.9
1899	„	900	480	18.4	34.6	3.7
1900	„	925	526	20.2	35.5	4.4
1901	26,544	876	387	14.5	33	2.4
1902	26,700	954	450	16.8	35.9	1.9
1903	„	900	437	16.3	33.7	2.7
1904	„	933	503	18.8	34.9	5.5

Following is a list of deaths occurring during the year in each street, the zymotic deaths being separately indicated :—

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Addison Street ... ..	4	
Albert Street ..	14	5
Alma Street ...	1	
Bilston Road ...	6	
Brunswick Terrace ...	1	
Birmingham Street ...	1	
Brookside ...	1	
Brunswick Park Road ...	6	3
Bright Street ...	4	
Brickkiln Street ...	5	4
Bridge Street ...	5	1
Chapel Street ...	5	3
Chapel Street, King's Hill ...	3	2
Corns Street ...	1	
Crankhall Lane ...	5	1
Camphill Lane ...	3	1
Camp Street ...	5	2
Church Hill ...	8	2
Church Street ...	7	4
Church Street, King's Hill ...	4	2
Cobden Street ...	9	1
Cook Street ...	8	2
Cross Street ...	4	2
Delves ...	5	1
Dale Street ...	7	2
Dangerfield Lane ...	3	1

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Darlaston Road ... ..	12	2
Darlington Street ... ..	5	1
Dudley Street ... ..	16	6
Elwell Street ... ..	4	2
Earl Street ... ..	2	
Forge Street ... ..	2	
Friar Street ... ..	1	
Foley Street ... ..	5	
Foster Street ... ..	15	9
Franchise Street ... ..	7	1
Great Western Street ... ..	4	1
High Street (Upper and Lower) ... ..	7	3
High Bullen ... ..	4	2
Hobbs Hole ... ..	1	1
Holden Road ... ..	3	
Hitchen's Croft ... ..	1	1
Hill Street ... ..	7	4
Hydes Lane .. ..	2	
Hobbins Street ... ..	7	3
Holyhead Road ... ..	24	8
Hollies Drive ... ..	1	
Hall End ... ..	6	2
Joynson Street ... ..	3	1
King's Hill ... ..	18	3
King Street ... ..	5	2
Longmore Street ... ..	1	1
Lloyd Street ... ..	2	
Little Hill ... ..	3	
Ladbury's Lane .. ..	7	1
Lea Brook ... ..	7	2
Loxdale Street ... ..	2	1
Moorcroft ... ..	1	
Moor Street ... ..	3	2
Market Place ... ..	2	1
Mill Street ... ..	6	1
Meeting Street ... ..	8	4
Moxley ... ..	9	4
North Street ... ..	1	
New Street ... ..	2	
Oakeswell Street ... ..	1	
Oakeswell Terrace ... ..	1	
Old Park Road ... ..	1	
Old Union Street ... ..	5	2
Oxford Street ... ..	4	1
Perry Street ... ..	1	
Pound Road ... ..	1	
Pritchard Street ... ..	1	
Piercy Street ... ..	6	1



STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Portway Road ... ..	16	6
Potter's Lane... ..	3	1
Park Street ... ..	1	
Queen Street ... ..	8	5
Russell Street... ..	7	3
Rooth Street ... ..	1	
Ridding Lane... ..	3	2
Sampson Street ... ..	3	1
Spring Head ... ..	2	
St. Paul's Road ... ..	1	
Short Street ... ..	1	1
St. James' Street ... ..	9	4
Stafford Street ... ..	10	2
Sparrows Forge Lane ... ..	4	
Trouse Lane ... ..	7	2
Union Street ... ..	10	3
Victoria Street ... ..	1	
Vicarage ... ..	5	
Vicar Street ... ..	2	
Windmill Street ... ..	7	1
Wood Street ... ..	3	
Wellcroft Street ... ..	5	1
Walsall Road ... ..	5	
Walsall Road (King's Hill) ... ..	14	1
Wood Green ... ..	13	2

Following is a table giving the cases of Zymotic Diseases notified to the Health Authority under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act :—

Scarlet Fever ... ..	99
Diphtheria ... ..	81
Erysipelas ... ..	20
Enteric Fever ... ..	54
Puerperal Fever ... ..	4
Membranous Croup ... ..	5

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The foregoing figures supply such statistics as are needed in order to form an opinion as to the health of the town during the year. The general death-rate is not strikingly high, but appears so by reason of its being much higher than that of the previous three

years. The average death-rate for the past ten years was 18·3 per 1,000, which is almost identical with the rate for 1904, viz., 18·8 per 1,000. It is, however, much less satisfactory to observe that that zymotic death-rate was 5·5 per 1,000 as compared with 3·2—the figure representing the average for the past ten years. As might be expected from the figures—there is a high infantile mortality—56 per cent. of the total, the average being 50 per cent.

It will be observed that no relation exists between the cases of zymotic disease notified and the deaths from such diseases. This arises from the fact that such highly fatal disorders as measles, diarrhœa, and whooping cough are not notifiable under the Act. Thus in 1903, when the general death-rate was only 16·3 per 1,000, there were 582 notifications of infectious disease, which number included 486 cases of scarlatina. If measles had been a notifiable disease, the notifications for 1904 would have been enormous. It has frequently happened in foregoing years that one or other of the zymotic diseases has been notably prevalent, but the high death-rate of 1904 is mainly due to the marked prevalence of several of such diseases. These were scarlatina, measles, diphtheria, enteric fever and diarrhœa. Of the other zymotics little need be said, excepting to record the entire absence during the year of any case of small-pox. On March 11th, information was received from the Commander of the Discharge Depôt at Gosport, that two men belonging to this locality had been landed at Southampton on March 9th from the s.s. Assaye—on which vessel during the voyage an outbreak of small-pox had occurred. One was a West Bromwich man, and notice of the matter was forwarded to the Health Authority of that town. The other man, who resided at Dale Street Terrace, was kept under observation, but he did not develop the disease.

So far as concerns scarlatina, the year witnessed the gradual subsidence of the epidemic, which had dragged on for five years.

In the year 1900 there were 154 cases notified, with 6 deaths.

„	1901	„	215	„	„	3	„
„	1902	„	272	„	„	13	„
„	1903	„	486	„	„	22	„
„	1904	„	99	„	„	5	„

It will thus be seen that in five years 1,226 cases of scarlatina were notified, with 49 deaths—which is equal to a mortality of 4 per cent. From this we may conclude that in spite of the protracted character of the epidemic, its virulence was but slight. The interest attaching to these figures is derived from the fact that we are here face to face with scarlatina which was not isolated. Some authorities oppose isolation on the ground that it aggravates the virulence of the disease. Whether this opinion be correct or not, it is plain that our experience in this particular epidemic justifies us in thinking that no system of isolation would have reduced the mortality to a lower figure than 4 per cent.

*Diphtheria* :—In this disease we have to deal with one of an altogether more fatal character; and it is most unsatisfactory to find that the year furnished no fewer than 81 cases, of which 19 were fatal. The proportion of deaths is not greater than one would expect, but the number of cases is much to be regretted.

A disturbing feature is that there was never any epidemic due to a discoverable cause, whose removal was followed by the extinction of the disease. On the other hand an examination of the notifications during the year shew that the disease was never more prevalent at one time than another, but that scarcely a week went by without the notification of one or more cases. In fact diphtheria was endemic throughout the year.

There were also five cases of membranous croup notified, of which four proved fatal. Since, moreover, the great majority of such cases are really diphtheritic in nature, we may consider the total deaths from diphtheria as numbering 23. This is certainly a serious matter, and it is greatly to be hoped that our experience during 1904 was exceptional. I am quite at a loss to suggest an explanation.

*Enteric Fever* :—54 cases were notified, and of these eight proved fatal. This disease has proved very troublesome during the year, and during the autumn assumed a distinctly epidemic character, as will be seen from the following figures. Taking month by month the notifications were as follows:—January, 1 case; February, 0; March, 0; April, 1; May, 0; June, 3; July,



2 ; August, 14 ; September, 9 ; October, 10 ; November, 11 ; December, 3. These figures shew that of the 54 cases, 44 occurred during the four months of August, September, October and November. This in itself is in no way peculiar, as enteric fever is essentially a disease of the autumn months. So much so, indeed, that it has frequently been spoken of as autumnal fever.

Cases were reported from Albert Street, King's Hill, Foster Street, Meeting Street, Elwell Street, Dale Street, Union Street, New Street, Bridge Street, Russell Street, Hill Street, Pitt's Square, Lea Brook, Old Union Street, St. James Street and Mill Street. The main incidence of the trouble, however, was in Church Street—a locality in which cases of typhoid fever have been of rare occurrence. From Church Street and Little Hill, which adjoins it, 21 cases were notified, arising in 10 houses. So many cases so near to each other suggested a common origin. This, however, was never discovered, although the circumstances associated with the outbreak were carefully investigated. All the houses had a good water supply from the Company's mains ; and the sources of the milk supply were found to be so diverse as to make it a practical impossibility that impure milk could have been the cause of the outbreak. The fact, moreover, that a number of cases occurred in other parts of the town, renders it probable that the long spell of hot and dry weather was mainly accountable for the disease. It must be remembered that in a town like Wednesbury where the privy midden system exists, there is always the danger of a typhoid outbreak, if the suitable atmospheric conditions prevail. A large proportion of the premises are saturated with sewage, and it is held by many authorities that a marked fall in the subsoil moisture is very apt to be followed by typhoid fever. Such is probably the explanation in the instance we are now considering. The summer of 1904 was exceptionally dry—and it was succeeded by a dry, bright autumn. When we have had a cool wet summer the cases of enteric fever have been very few—a remark which also applies to summer diarrhœa.

*Diarrhœa* (zymotic enteritis) occasioned 44 deaths during the year. My last remarks respecting typhoid fever are applicable to this disease. The heavy mortality is doubtless due in great measure to the character of the season.



*Measles* :—This disease is not notifiable, so that of the actual number of cases we know nothing. It is certain, however, that the figure must have been very high, amounting to many hundreds. Measles did not figure prominently until September, when the disease assumed an epidemic form. Towards the end of the month so many of the scholars were absent from Spring Head Infant School that an order was given to close the schools. During the next two months the disease became general. At the end of November St. Mary's Schools were closed; then a little later St. Bartholomew's Schools were closed; and on December the 12th a general order was given for the closure of all the schools until after the Christmas holidays. The deaths numbered 57, of which seven occurred in the third quarter of the year, and 50 in the fourth. It is curious to observe that measles are regarded much less seriously than scarlet fever; and yet the latter disease was productive of 49 deaths in five years during a protracted epidemic, whereas measles within three months occasioned no fewer than 50 deaths. The high mortality of this disease is doubtless in a large measure due to the fact that the public for the most part refuse to regard it in a serious light.

Reference to the vaccinations returns will shew that the results obtained were highly satisfactory. Thus of 810 children alive at the end of June, 1904, and born during the preceeding twelve months, no fewer than 723 were successfully vaccinated. Included in the balance of unvaccinated cases, amounting to 87, there were 38 certificates of exemption on account of conscientious objection, and seven of medical postponements. The percentage of successful vaccinations in 1904 was 89·2, as compared with 88·5 in 1903, 84·7 in 1902, and 62·7 in 1901. This indicates very thorough work on the part of the vaccination officer. The calf lymph supplied by the Government has again yielded excellent results. Furthermore, very few cases of vaccination in one place have occurred during the year.

## Sanitary Work.

Appended is a table shewing the work carried out in the Sanitary Inspector's Department :—

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK done in the Sanitary Inspector's Department during the year 1904, in the Urban District of Wednesbury.

	Inspections and observations made.	Formal Notices by the Authority.	Nuisances abated after Notice.
Foul Conditions ... ..	360	31	31
Structural Defects ... ..	5	5	5
Overcrowding ... ..	14	14	14
Unfit for Habitation ... ..	1	1	1
Lodging Houses ... ..	210	4	4
Bakehouses ... ..	90	7	7
Slaughter Houses ... ..	140	19	19
Ashpits and Privies ... ..	5320	154	119
Deposits of Refuse and Manure ... ..	7	7	7
Water Closets ... ..	67	13	13
Defective Taps ... ..	93	79	76
Other Faults ... ..	52	32	32
Water Supply ... ..	4	4	4
Pigsties ... ..	10	10	10
Animals improperly kept ... ..	20	16	16
Offensive Trades... ..	0	0	0
Smoke Nuisances ... ..	0	0	0
Other Nuisances... ..	51	45	45
Total ... ..	6434	441	403

Precautions against Infectious Disease :—

Lots of Bedding disinfected or destroyed ...	30
Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease ...	363

The Schools were disinfected by the caretaker, under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector.

The Inspectors under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act have now 16 cowsheds and 65 dairies under their control. To which 300 visits have been made, and orders given to whitewash in 14 instances.

## Factory and Workshops' Act, 1901.

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Under this Act, there are 26 Bakehouses, and these have received periodical inspections, and note kept of their capacity and means of ventilation. In seven cases it was found necessary to issue orders for their sanitary improvement.

There are also 96 workshops for various trades. Most of these have been visited, and where necessary, order issued for white-washing, which were promptly attended to. In three instances notices were served for additional closet accommodation which was duly provided.

Amongst other sanitary improvements carried out during the year were the following:—

*Nos. 38 and 39, Potters Land.*—Delapidated old building (schoolroom, washhouses, ashpits and privies) removed, and modern washhouses and privies provided and yard paved.

*Nos. 43, 44 and 45, Bridge Street.*—Old workshop, ashpit and privies removed, yard paved, water closet and coal place erected for each house.

*Nos. 80 and 81, Holyhead Road.*—Yard paved and privies converted into water closets.

*No. 39½, Bridge Street.*—Yard paved, privy converted into water-closet, and premises properly drained into sewer.

*Midland Vaults, Upper High Street.*—Yard paved, living rooms reconstructed and privies rebuilt.

Towards the close of the year it was found necessary to give notice for the closing of two common lodging houses, *viz.*, 33 and 34, High Bullen, owing to the filthy and delapidated condition of the premises, and the filthy condition of the bedding. During the three weeks they were closed the owner of the premises had the



place cleaned and repaired from top to bottom, and fitted up with 24 new bedsteads, bedding, cupboards, etc. The building was registered in the owner's name, re-opened, and may now be considered as in a satisfactory condition. In several instances water closets have been substituted for privies; and tins, which are collected weekly, substituted for ashpits.

The night-soil contractor has emptied and cleansed 5168 ashpits and cisterns during the year, which is an increase on any previous year. His work has been smoothly carried out, and, speaking generally, with greater efficiency than in the past. The horse-slaughtering premises at The Delves, referred to in last year's report, were entirely dismantled in the early spring, so that the nuisance formerly complained of will not recur.

In the foregoing statement attention has been directed to such figures and matters as are likely to interest or inform the committee. The statistics are less favourable than in the previous year, but it must be remembered that fluctuations from year to year are always to be looked for.

I remain, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER GARMAN,

*Medical Officer of Health.*